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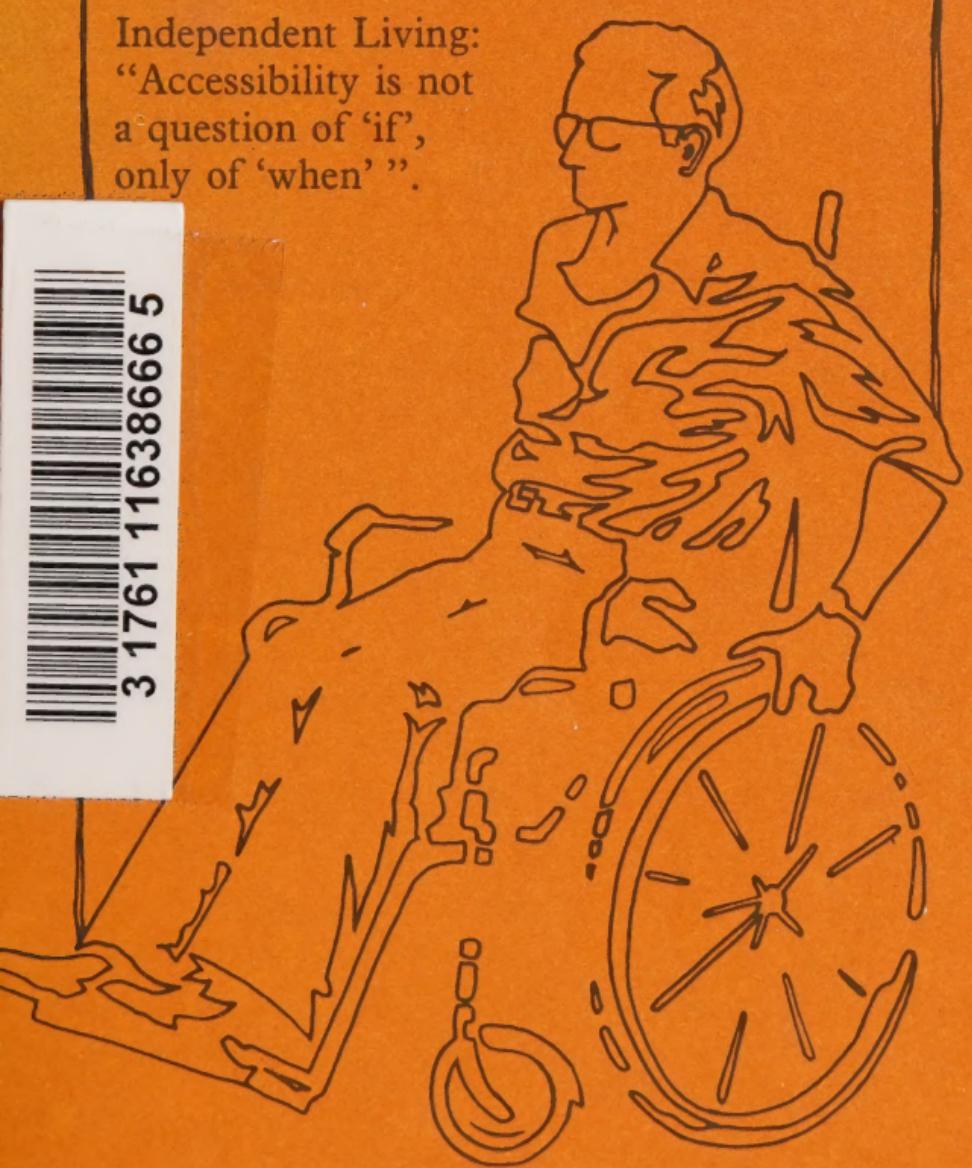
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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

# *Housing Disabled People*

Independent Living:  
"Accessibility is not  
a question of 'if',  
only of 'when'".



Canada

## Finding a place in the community

In 1981, disabled persons in Canada are striving for self-determination. They are anxious to show that — given the right conditions — they can develop lives of independent choice and action.

Disabled people have to face many obstacles in their quest for independence. One of them is the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation. The need is not just for a place to live but also for a place in the community, with the same access to the community as able-bodied people.

## Creating a climate of choice

CMHC programs and activities during the International Year of Disabled Persons are designed to serve a dual purpose: *to encourage and develop appropriate housing programs for use by disabled persons; and, at the same time, to increase professional and public awareness of the need for accessible residential environments.*

## Ensuring that there is a choice

To improve the range of housing programs for the disabled CMHC has adopted the following goals:

- 1) Ambulant persons with moderate disabilities should be offered a wide range of choice in the type and quality of their residential accommodation.
- 2) Moderately disabled persons (including those confined to a wheelchair) should be free to choose where they live in the community and their housing should afford the maximum degree of independence possible in the activities of daily living.
- 3) Severely disabled persons now confined to institutions should have the opportunity to live in a non-institutional environment in their home community, if and when they are prepared to meet the demands this places on them.

## Showing the way

Since 1946, when buildings were erected for disabled war veterans, CMHC has been concerned with minimizing the architectural barriers that prevent disabled people from carrying out normal daily activities in the home. Through ongoing research programs and seminars, it has sought to involve both its own staff and those in the housing industry in these concerns. Today, knowledgeable Canadian architects and planners agree that making a new house accessible for disabled persons costs very little more than normal construction — provided that accessibility is part of the initial design, not just an afterthought.

## Independent living versus institutional care

In recent years there has been widespread acceptance of the idea that housing which facilitates independent living for disabled persons is more beneficial and less expensive than institutional care. Because of this CMHC is encouraging the development of more non-profit, cooperative and group homes for disabled persons, plus at least a minimum level of accessibility in all apartment buildings.

Essentially the idea is to provide a number of new or renovated apartments for disabled persons interspersed in housing projects that are occupied by able-bodied people. The apartments may be made available on a rent-gearied-to-income basis, and, in some cases, this is complemented by at-home assistance for personal care, food preparation and housekeeping.

## Access to information

CMHC believes that, through technical and research programs, guidelines and information facilities in the Canadian Housing Information Centre at CMHC National Office in Ottawa, it can be a resource agency for groups involved in the planning and development of housing for disabled persons.

## **Financial Assistance**

Under the provisions of the National Housing Act, CMHC offers financial assistance in the form of a mortgage interest write-down to non-profit and cooperative groups wishing to develop housing for disabled persons. The assistance is the equivalent of a reduction from the current market interest rate to an interest rate as low as two per cent.

## **Start-up-funding**

To help meet some of the initial costs which they can expect to encounter, groups of disabled persons developing housing projects and organizations providing housing for mentally handicapped people can apply to CMHC local offices for financial assistance in the form of start-up funds.

Such funding will cover the administrative and planning costs of the project as well as architectural or legal fees which may be incurred. However, where there is a federal-provincial cost-sharing agreement in effect, CMHC can generally respond only to requests from groups which have a provincial commitment to fund operating costs.

## **Use of the RRAP program**

CMHC is active in residential renovation. The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) provides grants and low-interest loans to landlords, contractors, non-profit groups and individuals who wish to renovate existing buildings, in designated areas, which fail to meet health and safety standards. Recent changes in RRAP now identify as eligible to the program those who wish to adapt a dwelling for use by a disabled resident regardless of the location of the house.

**Please supply the following:**

\_\_\_\_\_ copies of the following publications for which a cheque or money order is enclosed

\_\_\_\_\_ copies of bibliography of research papers of interest to those concerned with housing for the disabled.

Information on CMHC assistance programs.

**or**

Please place my name on your mailing list.

I would like to speak with someone about a housing project for the disabled.

My group would like to borrow the film "Barrier-Free Housing".

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Firm/Association \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

To: Manager, Distribution Unit  
Information and Communication Centre  
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation  
Montreal Road  
Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0P7  
Tel. (613) 748-2795

## Housing standards

CMHC, in consultation with disabled persons and their organizations, is continuing to develop housing standards that take into account the various needs of disabled persons. CMHC supports the view of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped that "Accessibility is not a question of 'if', only of 'when'.

## Information about housing for the disabled

Information on CMHC programs and funding assistance for housing for disabled persons can be obtained from CMHC regional or local offices. In addition, guidelines are available on designing houses, nursing homes and other forms of accommodation for those with special needs:

NHA 5076	HOUSING THE HANDICAPPED	\$2.00
NHA 5267	NURSING HOMES AND HOSTELS: DESIGN GUIDELINES	\$3.00
NHA 5186	SAFETY IN THE HOME	\$2.60
NHA 5075/M	HOUSING THE ELDERLY*	\$2.00

The publications may be obtained either from CMHC Local and Regional Offices or by using the attached order form.

CMHC's award-winning film, "Barrier-Free Housing", is also available. This is loaned free-of-charge to groups or organizations concerned with promoting the cause of barrier-free design.

\* This book contains many useful design suggestions for those planning housing for disabled persons with a particular emphasis on disabilities resulting from the aging process.

**International Year  
of Disabled Persons**



**Année internationale  
des personnes handicapées**



**Canada Mortgage  
and Housing Corporation**

**Honourable Paul Cosgrove  
Minister**

**Société canadienne  
d'hypothèques et de logement**